1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

743 758 Currently the Canadian government provides qualified medical attention for Indians at two hospitals, one for Yukon Indians in Whitehorse and another for Indians of British Columbia at Fort St. John. The former hospital is about three hundred miles from Lower Post, while the latter is about six hundred. To secure admission and permission for air travel to either hospital, the missionary or police must radio the Indian Agent at Telegraph Creek. Should the agent be away from his office, travelling in the performance of his duties, a reply to the wire giving authorization for transportation and hospitalization may be delayed for several days. Such delay occurred during the summer of 1945 in the case of a young victim of spinal meningitis. The boy was in delirium for three days before authorization was received to fly him to Whitehorse, where he died and was buried.

744 A nurse and physician employed by the Indian Affairs Branch visit the Indian community at Lower Post each summer and suggest medical or hospital treatment as required. The Mounted Police remain vigilant for evidence of venereal infection, and when a source of such disease is reported insist on the patient receiving prompt treatment. These precautionary attitudes contribute to the fact that the degree of venereal infection, despite the recent large influx of strangers, is relatively slight.

758 Native attitudes toward hospitalization vary. A number of men expressed admiration for the air forces' hospital at Watson Lake and also spoke well of the care they had received in the government hospital at Whitehorse. Other people severely criticized the regimen of public hospitals, some without themselves having been patients. Speaking of the Whitehorse institution, where he had gone to have a dislocated hip bone reset, Old Man claimed that the wards for white patients are superior to those reserved for Indians. Asked how he liked the hospital, he answered: "I didn't like it. You smell something." The odor, he said, reminded him of death and was absent in the white wards which he had casually visited. He admitted that the staff of the institution had "treated me fine." Another informant complained that the same hospital had starved his young daughter, feeding her only bread and water twice a day. He asserted that the hospital employs doctors at government expense who try to starve Indians to death.

Death

761 Death, the separation of body and soul, is a condition that usually results from old age and from serious illness or accident. In holding these notions of death, the Kaska are not stoic fatalists resigned to dying. For the individual, his family, and friends the final moment is to be avoided and delayed as long as possible. Death, a bad thing in the contemplation of which the Indian is never at ease, not only represents a tragedy for the deceased, but also introduces danger for the surviving members of the latter's family as well as other members of the community who may come into the orbit of the event.

761 774 The living organism represents a union of body and soul or, as the latter is referred to by the Kaska, wind.[33] Some people also reported the spiritual existence of the shadow, but did not clearly differentiate this concept from wind. Although death represents a final dissolution of the body-soul relationship, certain temporary alienations may occur without neces-

[33] Throughout this section the words "soul" (wind) and "spirit" will be used with certain definite meanings. The term soul refers to the spiritual attribute of the body. Upon death it becomes a spirit. The visible manifestation of a spirit is referred to as a "ghost."

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

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sarily bringing about the end of life. Thus dreaming represents a condition in which the soul temporarily leaves the body and "walks around." At this time it may "find out something—what you're gonna do." Should the soul travel too far from its proper locus, the life of the sleeping person may be endangered. Old Man reported that he awoke one night to find his second wife hardly breathing. He chafed her wrists and rolled her body. "Finally wind come out." He asserted that her soul had traveled too far from the body which, as a result, was close to lifelessness. Old Kean referred to the mobility of the soul when he declared: "My tajuš know lots of things. Just like man it go anyplace."

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Following the final and permanent alienation of the body and wind, the spirit is believed to linger around the place of death for an indefinite period of time, generally from three days to a week. During this interim period the spirit is regarded as malevolent, being particularly dangerous for children below the age of puberty and to those relatives who have offended the deceased in life.[29] Even a child's spirit presents such danger to living children and especially to surviving siblings. The intent of the spirit is to secure a child to accompany it in the afterworld, while toward relatives who have injured it, the spirit seeks vengeance. Four days following Old Metša's death, Old Man commented on the two fires that had recently broken out, one in Hans Donnelly's line camp and the other in Hans' wife's tent. Although empirical explanations for both accidents were readily advanced and discussed, Old Man thought that Old Metša's spirit was also at work. "This old woman suffer. Nobody cut wood for her. Hans never cut wood for her; nobody come around. . . . Used to be old people believed it." It was pointed out that Hans' tent had burned eleven hours before death occurred. Old Man agreed but added: "Old woman just about all in that morning."

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During the period shortly after death, a spirit may also communicate to people through the crackling of burning wood. When this phenomenon is heard, a small piece of bacon or other food is thrown into the stove as an offering to the spirit. Old Man revealed that Lady Suza had been seen to respond to such a signal, while her mother's unburied body remained in camp, by throwing a bit of food into the stove. Following the period of sojourn (or, according to one informant, immediately after death) the spirit travels to the afterworld.

Occasionally spirits return from the afterlife and manifest themselves in human sounds and activities. Sometimes they are also seen in human guise although, lacking tangible existence, they cannot be felt. Fear of ghosts is not an intense or prevalent characteristic of the Kaska. One experience of this kind was noted. Ten days after Old Metša's death, Old Man reported that he, his wife, Lady Suza, and Paulette Connelly were awakened by the sound of footsteps in the snow outside the cabin. A moment later they heard the sound of ripping canvas. Old Man expressed fear that one of the dogs had gotten loose and was breaking into the adjoining tent, where the old woman had died. Paulette arose and lit a candle. As soon as the light appeared, all sounds ceased. Paulette left the house but could find no tracks in the snow. Upon checking the dog shelters, she found all the animals in place. The next morning Old Man looked around, but also failed to locate any tracks. We asked Old Man his opinion of the phenomenon. "I figger maybe ghost come back," he said. "That woman suffer too much."

[29] Compare Opler, *An Interpretation of Ambivalence of Two American Indian Tribes* (1936); Opler, *Further Comparative Anthropological Data Bearing on the Solution of a Psychological Problem* (1938); also Honigmann, *Northern and Southern Athapaskan Eschatology* (1945), 469.

treatment by them was unknown. On the whole their children were docile and obedient. Mothers often sang to their young children (infants to about six years old) and composed songs to them. These songs expressed their love, pity, admiration and solicitude for them and some of them were full of pathos. Some mothers consider they honor their children in the eyes of others by composing songs to them, and exceptional mothers have composed ditties to each child. These songs were also sometimes used as lullabies to soothe and put children to sleep. The airs of these songs are sometimes taken by other people and used for other occasions, and their origin becomes lost. 855 855 533

The following are customs in connection with children. It was believed the souls or lives of infants were only slightly connected with their bodies and therefore care was exercised that the two did not become detached. Some women when carrying their infants away from the camp or house commenced to call a.nē, "come on", to the baby's soul or spirit the moment they left the camp, and continued to do this the first half mile or so they traveled. This was done in case the child's soul wanted to stay in camp and would not go with the body. Also whenever she crossed water, the mother dropped small bunches of brush in the water and called "come" to the child's spirit. This was done even if 854 774

854 774 the water to be crossed was only a foot wide. It was believed the baby's spirit was afraid of water and would not cross with the body excepting this was done. Even if the spirit was in the baby and not following it when the water was reached it might through fear leave the baby when the water was crossed. Care was exercised thus with children until they were strong enough to walk or at least to sit up. After they had passed the most helpless stage of infancy, there was less danger, as the soul by this time had become used to the body and was more satisfied to dwell in it. The body and soul had become more adapted to each other and had commenced to function as one being, or at least be in unity.

789 854 If a child cried much at times or was, as it were, naturally a cry-baby, the mother made a little image in human form of grass with legs, arms, head, etc., and placed it next the baby's breast or heart for about four days. The first day hereafter when the father went hunting he tied a string to this image and trailed it behind him as he went along. When he had gone some distance into the woods he concealed the image by covering it entirely with dry leaves. If this did not entirely succeed in changing the baby's disposition the same thing was repeated again, and the baby then ceased all excessive crying.

841 nor touch any of their belongings, especially those things connected with hunting. She must not touch any game and must not eat fresh meat of any kind of large game. If she did so the game would become smart or wise and the hunters would be unable to get them. She must not eat any kind of meat from any part of a bear.

841 262 Some informants claim the restrictions on menstruating women as far as food was concerned were just the same as those enjoined on pubescent girls. They must not eat bear meat, nor fresh meat of caribou, moose, sheep, beaver, marmot etc., nor the heads of animals. They could eat feet of caribou and moose but not of bear. Women did not eat the intestines of bears. If they did, their children would be sickly and ugly. After the child-bearing period was over they might eat intestines and feet of bear and also heads of any kind of game, etc. Some claim women menstruating did not eat even the feet of caribou and moose if fresh. In fact they were supposed to eat no fresh meat of any kind nor fresh fish of any kind. They ate only well-dried meat and dried fish. This was because the spirit, life, or soul of the animal was still in the meat when fresh and the fresher the meat the more of the spirit it contained.

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841 Two or three women may occupy the same menstruation lodge, if convenient. When the woman returns home, medicine bags, guns, etc., and children are taken

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

Like most people the Kaska Indians postulated the existence of certain normally unseen and unsensed entities, including counterparts or souls of the empirically sensed animals.[3] Other sensed events, like stones or clouds, also possessed a transcendental character such that they perhaps warrant designation of Kaska thinking as animistic. The normally unseen world included Gusliiʼna ("devil"), who dwelt at the last point of a long river.[4] He lived in the company of a woman, ɔʼɣa, who became the first sheep after she had been killed by the culture hero, Tsuʼguya. The attribution of horns to the devil may well represent the influence of biblical mythology. Informants denied the notion of a cold being operating as the devil's helper. Apparently the words gusliі, "cold," and Gusliina are not related. The Indians were cognizant of the North Wind Man (itsiipaʔotena) who brought suffering. "If I am mean he will make a big wind to make me suffer. He doesn't want an evil man to follow his track, so he covers it with snow."[5] Cannibalistic giants, like Teɣutsiia and Etceɣusʼtala, inspired considerable fear. Tsitaɣitsatse, another giant, befriended men. Weaker than Etceɣustela he nevertheless killed the latter with the aid of Indians. When Tsitaɣitsatse defecated, his feces became hard as rock the moment that they struck the earth. Helpful to man and powerful in his behalf were the dwarfs, who, however, were constantly menaced by animals. In warfare these small beings helped to bring up wind and cold that paralyzed the enemy. In size a dwarf reached about the height of a caribou jaw. One such being could pack only about half a pound. Despite the tendency of the dwarfs to steal women, people laughed when they spoke of the antics of the little people.[6] Nobody ever secured shamanistic power from a dwarf. Informants could not recall a practice of making offerings to rocks.

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Long ago monstrous animals roamed the world. Although similar beliefs are widespread in North America, in the Cassiar traditions of such animals cannot be discussed without reference to the fossil evidence of mammoths and dinosaurs encountered in the region. The following tale illustrates the kinds of narratives that perpetuated beliefs in monsters.

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Once when a group of people were camping a big monster, like an elephant, came close to the camp. A shaman who had six fingers (lasloona, "many fingers") went out to meet the animal and addressed it like a person. The monster exclaimed, "I saw young game track. I was going to have a good meal,

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[3] "It is believed that all animals understand human speech. For this reason natives are careful what they say about them. . . ." Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 164.

[4] Along the Mackenzie the Indians recognized a cognate "devil, 'Ha is liner,' or, 'the sorcerer.'" McLean, *Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory* (1932), 342.

[5] Among the Swampy Cree the oldest of four brothers was the North Wind who sent cold and punished evil doers. Skinner, *Notes on the Eastern Cree and Northern Saulteaux* (1911), 59; Speck, *Naskapi* (1935), 56-57.

[6] Among the Pelly Indians "there are the little men of the Mountain that are supposed to be about four feet high at the most and have fine living places in the heart of the mountains and are exceptionally strong and wise who come out occasionally and capture their women for wives in some cases making the father of the girl they have taken a medicineman in return for the girl." (Field, *Unpublished manuscript* [1913], 5.) The Attawapiskat Cree were also not afraid of the dwarf people who inhabited the rocky cliffs along rivers. Honigmann, *Attawapiskat Cree field notes* (1947–48).

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

that he lay down to sleep the youth wished that a source of auxiliary power would that night be revealed to him. Communications from animals or other symbols constituted the marks of a successful vision quest. Sometimes the animals encouraged the boy to emulate them. "Don't stay with a bunch of people. Stay alone and you'll have strong power," might be their advice. Or the youth might be advised to avoid sleeping with women "for a little while" in order to obtain lasting good fortune. Some animals assured the aspirant that when he was hungry an animal patron would always provide assistance. Such a dream must never (?) be revealed to another person. Following his initial experience a boy usually sought additional helpers, subsequently spending longer periods in solitude. Sometimes an aspirant passed a month alone in the bush. In his dreams the youth might be advised that his power had now been secured and that he could freely "bother" women again.[12]

A successful vision quest apparently represented a portion of the animal's wind (or soul) passing into the dreamer to enhance the latter's natural ability. Upon returning from a dream quest a boy would always contrive to enter camp by a trail different from the one along which he had started forth. In the period of seeking visions a young man felt sensitive about his sister (or other women?) staring at his mouth. According to the informant, only "nice" people encouraged their sons to dream for power. A father who feared the hardships associated with life in the winter wisely insisted on the vision quest, thus insuring that the boy would be able to predict the location of game and save the people from starvation. Should a man's son show fear of sleeping in isolation he would not be forced into the ritual. A man might falsely pretend to have secured power. Eventually the lie revealed itself in the person's ineffectual attempts to cure or to locate game. The story is told of one Indian who reported an exceptional vision to his friends. A grizzly bear with a cub had come to sing to him. Nobody believed him. The shaman said, "Come down with me and you'll see the bear and the kid play with me." Somebody accepted the invitation and witnessed the grizzly harmlessly play with the man. The "kid" played with them both. Perhaps this tale is more related to the wonder working undertaken by powerful shamans than it is to the dream quest.

The successful solicitation of power brought a man into relation with one or more animal helpers upon whose aid he now counted in performing curing and other ceremonies. In addition curers might dream of natural objects (like leaves or bark) that possessed medicinal properties. A shaman collected such materials and kept them in a small pouch. Ordinarily no particular dress distinguished a shaman. When called upon

and dancing; further power sought; shamans possessed several spirits; most shamans were men. The Tlingit patterns of obtaining an animal sponsor differ substantially from those followed further south on the Pacific Coast but resemble closely shamanistic patterns of the Caesiar. Drucker, *Culture Element Distributions: XXVI, Northwest Coast* (1950), 223–225.

[12] The English word "bother" is used by the Kaska to designate a variety of experiences, including sexual intercourse. (Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* [1949], 138.) Navaho interpreters also use the same English word to translate what is probably the same Athapaskan verb. "For example, when the sense is that a person ought to avoid persons, animals, or objects, the preferred English verb is 'bother.' 'Don't bother your wife.' (Usually with the meaning: 'don't have sexual intercourse with your wife.')" Kluckhohn, *Patterning as Exemplified in Navaho Culture* (1941), 110.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River
Tsalona
Frances Lake

764 765 768 Everyone in camp assembled when death seemed inevitable. Long ago bodies were disposed of by cremation and the Tahltan continued the custom a long time after the Dease River people began to inter their dead in the ground. Coffins as well as any form of tree burial were denied. Members of the opposite moiety handled the corpse. Mourning rites included hair cutting but not mutilation. The dwelling in which death had taken place as well as most of the possessions left by the deceased came to an end by destruction, a practice designed to avoid illness.

761 764 765 768 *Tsalona.* Death followed when the wind deserted the body and journeyed to an afterworld about which the informant knew little. The corpse was cremated and the bones intered in a small pit about one foot deep. Anyone who had handled the corpse avoided food and drink for two days but no particular relatives were charged with this responsibility. Elevated cache and canoe burials could not be recalled. In mourning a widow cut short her hair, fasted for several days, and wore ragged clothing. At night she slept little, deliberateiy keeping herself awake by means of sharp sticks planted under her head. Her plans for remarriage demanded the approval of her brother-in-law [304] or he might wed her himself. Scarification, face blackening, and hair singeing were denied. A widower observed food and drink taboos but did not cut his hair.

Property destruction following death was denied.

774 761 775 *Frances Lake Kaska.* A person's wind or soul, located in the stomach, resembled the breath or the air that one inhaled. Just as breathing sustained life the loss of the wind (breath) produced death. The informant denied that there could be a temporary alienation of body and wind. The soul continued to survive after quitting the body and if it had belonged to a good man became reincarnated. Following death the ghost (tsune), which was always dangerous, remained in the neighborhood for a period ranging from ten days to a year. During this time it hunted, copulated with women, visited its birthplace, and completed any tasks that the deceased throughout his life had left uncompleted. In appearance the ghost resembled a living Indian but could only be seen and not sensed tactually. Ghosts also avenged themselves for injuries that had been sustained in life. To announce themselves they sometimes whistled. Knocking did not constitute a ghostly signature.

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rather cool, dingy place underground to the west; a light agreeable place on the same level as the earth to the east; and a place above in the sky. Only people killed in battle go to the last. Sometimes they come out, and dance as the aurora. When the latter consist of red clouds, people say there is a war somewhere. When the streamers of the aurora descend, forming a kind of chute, it is said that the spirits are receiving a brave warrior whose soul ascends through this chute, and is borne away as the streamers ascend. The sky heaven is said to be the best abode. That to the east is somewhat like this earth, but better in so far as food is always abundant. Most people go to it. They have to descend a slippery hill, and cross a river. Some are afraid, and turn back to be reborn again, or wander about until they reach the place of shades in the west where conditions are not as good as in the other places, and food is often scarce. Teit, *Ou Tahltan* (*Athabaskan*) *Work* (1912), 486. Cf. Speck, *Naskapi* (1935), 51, who also speaks of the dead appearing in the northern lights.